

## Legislative Activities

### Tracking the Issues

- A reconfirmation hearing for KHPA Board members Garen Cox, Ned Holland and Joe Tilghman is scheduled in the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee on *Tuesday, March 31, 2009*.
- The Clean Indoor Air Bill language has been added to HB 2221, which is pending in the Senate. Debate in the Senate was postponed this week to allow time to draft proposed amendments. Debate is expected to resume on *Monday, March 30, 2009*.
- The budget conference committee completed work Thursday night. House and Senate votes are expected early next week.

## Budget Includes SCHIP Expansion, Along With Severe Belt-Tightening

The Kansas House and Senate both passed budget bills this week that include funding for expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). But the bills also call for substantial cutbacks in the Kansas Health Policy Authority's administrative budget - cuts that agency officials warn could adversely affect both SCHIP and Medicaid.

"The federal stimulus package helped make it possible for the legislature to fully fund our expected caseloads," said Marcia Nielsen, Executive Director of KHPA. "But we're still being asked to come up with \$3.1 million in savings in other parts of our budget. That will have a direct impact on our ability to administer SCHIP and Medicaid. We don't think that's what Congress had in mind when it passed the stimulus bill that provided Kansas with an estimated \$400-\$500 million in additional Medicaid money. Their intent was to protect state Medicaid programs during these tough economic times."

On March 17, [KHPA announced](#) that the economic downturn and rising unemployment rate in Kansas were already causing a backlog in processing applications for medical assistance and that agency officials expect the problem to continue getting worse in the months ahead.

This week, Nielsen provided lawmakers with information detailing additional cuts the agency would have to make in order to meet reduction targets included in the House and Senate budget bills. Combined with those already made in the current fiscal year, the additional cuts would amount to a 20 percent reduction in staff positions, as well as substantial cuts in contractual services that are critical to processing Medicaid and SCHIP applications, claims and payments.

"We know that Kansas is not alone in this dilemma," Nielsen said. "These are the kinds of difficult decisions that legislators and state agencies all over the country are struggling with right now. Lawmakers face an incredible challenge trying to balance the needs of the state with the limited resources they have available. We remain hopeful that we can resolve these issues and restore at least some of the cuts before the session is over."

The legislature is scheduled to finish the regular part of the 2009 session next week. They will recess for about two and a half weeks, during which time they'll receive new, updated revenue and caseload projections. Then they'll return April 29<sup>th</sup> to pass the final budget bill and to reconsider any bills vetoed by the Governor.

## Agency Activities

### KHPA Board Executive Committee Meeting

*Date:* April 9th  
*Time:* 3:30–5:00 pm  
*Location:* Landon State Office Bldg, Room 9E

### KHPA Board Finance and Audit Committee Meeting

*Date:* April 13th  
*Time:* 3:00 -4:30 pm  
*Location:* Landon State Office Bldg

### Employee Advisory Committee

*Date:* April 22nd  
*Time:* 10:30 am  
*Location:* Landon State Office Bldg, Room 106

### KHPA Board Meeting

*Date:* April 21st  
*Time:* 8:30 am–4:30 pm  
*Location:* Ramada Inn, Madison Room, 420 SE 6th Street, Topeka

## Kansas Hospitals, Clinics to Receive Stimulus Funds, HHS Announces

Community health centers in Kansas, as well as hospitals that treat large numbers of low-income and uninsured patients will soon get additional funding through the federal stimulus package to help them absorb the growing demand for health services.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced March 20 that it was making \$268 million of Recovery Act funding available for “disproportionate share hospitals” (DSH), which are those that provide a disproportionate share of uncompensated services. Kansas hospitals will receive a little more than \$1 million of that funding.

Kansas Medicaid Director Dr. Andrew Allison, Ph.D., said the additional stimulus money will bring total DSH funding for Kansas (including the state’s share of the cost) to \$68.9 million for the current fiscal year, an increase of \$1.6 million over what was expected before passage of the stimulus bill. He said the funding partially offsets the losses those facilities incur for providing uncompensated care to low-income and uninsured patients.

From 2006 to 2007, Allison said, facilities that receive DSH payments provided more than \$218 million worth of uncompensated care, most of which was related to treating uninsured patients.

Also, on March 27, HHS announced grants totaling \$338 million to Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC’s) across the country, including \$3.1 million to 13 FQHC’s in Kansas. HHS estimates the grants in Kansas will enable those clinics to treat an additional 38,119 patients. They will also help create or retain 49 health center jobs.

HHS says both funding packages are intended to help maintain community health programs during the economic downturn as more Americans are joining the ranks of the uninsured.

### Upcoming Event in Kansas:

Kansas Advocates for Better Care (KABC) presents “Building Blocks for Caregiving: Skills to succeed at the hardest job you’ll ever have” on Friday, April 3, 2009 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm at the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, 200 Maine St., 2nd floor Auditorium, Lawrence, KS 66044. The cost to attend the event is a \$10 donation per person. There are a limited number of scholarships available. For more information about the event and/or KABC, please visit their Website at [www.kabc.org](http://www.kabc.org).